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Jesuit Graves

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JESUIT GRAVES

Midsummer. Irish overcast. Oatmeal-colored sky.
The Jesuit pit. Last mass
For hundreds whose names are incised on the marble wall
Above the gravel and grassless dirt.
Just dirt and the small stones—
how strict, how self-effacing.

Not suited for you, however, Father Bird-of-Paradise,
Whose *plumage of far wonder* is not formless and not faceless,
Whatever you might have hoped for once.
Glasnevin Cemetery, Dublin, 3 July 1995.
For those who would rise to meet their work,
that work is scaffolding.

Sacrifice is the cause of ruin.
The absence of sacrifice is the cause of ruin.
Thus the legends instruct us,
North wind through the flat-leaved limbs of the sheltering trees,
Three desperate mounds in the small, square enclosure,
souls God-gulped and heaven-hidden.

P. Gerardus Hopkins, 28 July 1844–8 June 1889, Age 44.
 And then the next name. And then the next,
 Soldiers of misfortune, lock-step into a star-colored tight dissolve,
 History's hand-me-ons. But you, Father Candescence,
 You, Father Fire?
 Whatever rises comes together, they say. They say.

